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Elections to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other elections: election of fifteen members of the Human Rights Council

Note verbale dated 1 November 2010 from the Permanent Mission of the Congo to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Congo to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Secretary-General and has the honour to inform him that the Congolese Government has decided to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the period 2011-2014 at the elections to be held in May 2011 in New York.

In that regard, the Permanent Mission of the Republic of the Congo is pleased to transmit an explanatory note on the commitments made by the Congolese Government in the area of the promotion and protection of human rights (see annex).

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Annex to the note verbale dated 1 November 2010 addressed to the Secretary-General by the Permanent Mission of the Congo to the United Nations

Candidature of the Republic of the Congo to the Human Rights Council, 2011-2014

Voluntary commitments in implementation of General Assembly resolution 60/251

The Republic of the Congo has always acted in accordance with international law in the promotion and protection of human rights.

Indeed, one of the goals pursued by the Congolese Government in this field is to establish the necessary conditions to uphold justice and respect the obligations arising from international treaties and other sources of international law.

The Republic of the Congo, as in the past, is submitting its candidature for the Human Rights Council in order to join the efforts of the international community to strengthen those rights. It therefore undertakes to promote and protect the universal principles of human rights at the national, regional and international levels.

The Republic of the Congo was a member of the Human Rights Council from 2005 to 2008. The positions it took within this body, when examining human rights violations, testify to its commitment to work continually to promote the ideals of justice and equality as enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, which proclaims "faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small ..."

It is appropriate to note in passing the very important role that the Congo played in the United Nations struggle against racial segregation throughout the apartheid years in Africa.

I. Participation by the Congo in efforts by the international community for the protection of human rights

The Republic of the Congo contributes to United Nations efforts for the promotion and protection of human rights through its adherence to or ratification of the following international human rights instruments:

- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- The Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women of Full Age

The Republic of the Congo has already signed the following instruments:

- The Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide
- The Palermo Protocol
- The optional protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child
- The International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance
- The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

II. The Republic of the Congo and internal human rights

The Constitution of 20 January 2002 reaffirms the attachment of the Republic of the Congo to democratic principles and guarantees the fundamental rights and freedoms of Congolese citizens. Its preamble contains the fundamental principles proclaimed and guaranteed by:

- The Charter of the United Nations
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and all other international human rights instruments

The Constitution states in its article 7 that "the human person is sacred and has the right to life. The State has the strict obligation to respect and to protect that right. Each citizen has the right to full personal development, while respecting the rights of others, public order, morals and good conduct".

On 6 and 8 May 2009, the Republic of the Congo submitted its report under the universal periodic review mechanism established by the Human Rights Council.

An interactive dialogue between the Congolese delegation and the international community focused on the following points:

- violations of the rights of children and women
- discrimination and exploitation of indigenous peoples
- sexual offences against children and women
- dysfunction in the legal system
- violations of freedom of expression and freedom of the press

With regard to these points as a whole, it is important to note that women enjoy the same rights as men in all areas of life (the Congo has a gender policy).

Minorities receive sustained attention from the Government, which introduced a bill on the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous peoples.

The rights of the child are guaranteed, sexual offences punished and civil liberties guaranteed. Handicapped persons also enjoy protection from the State.

III. Statement of commitments

Assuming that the Republic of the Congo is elected as a member of the Human Rights Council, it will once again support the Council's efforts to promote and protect human rights everywhere in the world by virtue of the relevant conventions.

Furthermore, it will cooperate with States and civil society organizations for the respect of those rights, in particular through the competent jurisdictions.